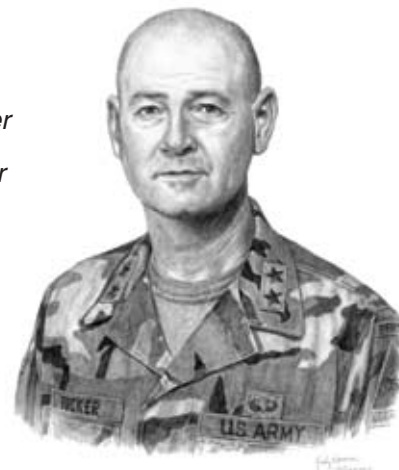


Major General Terry L. Tucker
Commanding General
U.S. Army Armor Center



Armor Conference 2003 — Overview

In the May-June 2003 issue of *ARMOR*, we were gearing up for Armor Conference 2003. For those of you who attended this year's conference, I hope it met your expectations. For those of you who could not attend, I have included some of the conference's highlights.

Our roster of keynote speakers was impressive in any discussion, and included Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eric Shinseki; Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, General Kevin Byrnes; Commanding General, United States Army Europe (USAREUR), General B.B. Bell; Commander III Corps, Lieutenant General Tom Metz; U.S. Army G3, Lieutenant General Richard Cody; and Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack Tilley. Retired Lieutenant General Paul Funk hosted the Armor Association Banquet and Lieutenant General Larry Jordan spoke during the Chief of Armor Luncheon.

General Shinseki reported that Global War on Terrorism operations have proven that our soldiers can fight and adapt while conducting simultaneous operations across the spectrum. In concurrent, synchronized operations, U.S. soldiers and Marines, along with our Allies, were engaged in a close combat fight and humanitarian operations, while rebuilding facilities and services throughout Iraq. In addressing the Objective Force, the Chief told us that the Army is on track, and he challenges every single member of the force to be engaged and excited about the future.

This was our Chief's last visit to Fort Knox in uniform. After 38 years of service as a cavalryman and tanker, he steps down and leaves a Transforming Army with irreversible momentum. He concluded with, "it has been a privilege to be your Chief, but more importantly, it has been a privilege to be a soldier." Well, we in the Mounted Force say, "Thanks Chief, it has been our privilege to serve with you and follow your lead!"

General Kevin Byrnes, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander, told us that the performance of U.S. soldiers in combat has proven that our leader development training is right and produces competent, agile, and adaptive leaders; and that soldiers out of initial entry training are up to the combat task.

In recounting his visits with wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, General Byrnes said, "The non-commissioned officers wanted to talk about their soldiers and the soldiers wanted to talk about their leaders. This is testimonial of soldiers and leaders sharing mutual trust and respect." He also spoke about getting the experience of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom spread across the force by bringing veterans of these operations to schools as instructors and trainers. Bottom line — we will stay on track with training as our number one priority.

During his presentation, General B.B. Bell described the role of U.S. Army Eu-

rope in setting the conditions for operations on the Northern Front during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although diplomatic differences resulted in the 4th Infantry Division entering the theater through Kuwait, the effect of USAREUR units in northern Turkey was nothing short of amazing. The insertion of an Armor task force into an airfield secured by the 173d Airborne Brigade showed the remarkable flexibility, agility, and adaptability that are the hallmark of Armor and Cavalry. General Bell challenged us to see into the future and imagine how a Stryker Brigade — then a unit of action — would deploy and be employed in that same battlespace — a pretty good argument for where we are going.

Lieutenant General Tom Metz brought us up to date on Phantom Corps and surprised us with the fact that 65 percent of the Phantom Corps had deployed in support of operations in the Global War On Terrorism. You would have been proud when he described the support that 1st Cavalry Division provided the 4th Infantry after they had shipped their equipment and needed to maintain their training edge. Passing on a little experience to young leaders, he advised, "know your doctrine, develop your leaders, and train your soldiers." It's a pretty simple formula, and one we should remember and enforce.

Lieutenant General Richard Cody's view of the Army assured us that our training

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strategy is on target. The Army's task of changing fielding priorities and deployment schedules to get the right units to the right place at the right time with the right equipment was absolutely bone-crushing work. He praised soldiers and units that met this challenge and stayed ahead of the next change — all with professional competence and an eye on the bigger picture. He described how Armor units were task organized with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 82d Airborne Division, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) to support our light/heavy rotations to the Combat Training Centers. We must continue to develop the doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures to support these mission sets.

Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack Tilley, addressed issues effecting soldiers and their families, such as pay and ongoing efforts directed at stability and a more predictable deployment plan. Because of recent deployments, many soldiers have missed critical career schooling. SMA Tilley assured us of his commitment to get soldiers to school as their units return from deployments, and explained options

under consideration such as mobile training teams and distance learning.

During the Armor Association Banquet, Retired Lieutenant General Funk left us with the message that the Cavalry and Armor Force is not platform driven, and we should be agile-minded as we move to what the future tank may be. "We want tank capabilities," and as the saying goes, "Cavalry is a state of mind."

Lieutenant General Jordan was here on his last visit in uniform and addressed the assembly during the Chief of Armor Luncheon. His encouraging remarks reiterated the importance of continuing to demonstrate Army relevancy, and that no matter what the Army looks like years from now, that Army will still be the Nation's force on the ground.

I offer my sincere gratitude to these senior leaders who have kept us on azimuth for so many years, and made Armor Conference 2003 top notch in every way.

You may have heard the good news concerning the Future Combat System (FCS) program. On 14 May 2003, the Defense

Acquisition Board (DAB) approved the Army's requests to move the FCS program into the systems development and demonstration phase, as well as manage the FCS program as a family of systems. This means that the Armor Center, the Unit of Action Maneuver Battle Lab (UAMBL), and the TRADOC System Manager (TSM) FCS, along with our sister branch proponents and the joint community will continue to be lead agents in Army and joint transformation. You can be very proud of the Armor Center's role in bringing the FCS program to this point.

On 30 May 2003, we promoted our Deputy Commanding General, Robert W. Mixon Jr., to Major General. The bad news is that the Mixon family will be leaving us. The good news is that he and Ruth will move to Fort Monroe, Virginia, where MG Mixon will assume duty as the TRADOC Deputy Chief of Staff for Developments — the right man for a tough job. MG Mixon leaves having made incredible contributions to Armor's future, and we wish the Mixons all the best.

FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT!